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Discussion Questions

1. Describe Petra, Calder, Tommy, and Ms. Hussey. What are the most important things to know about them? Who would you most like to be friends with? Why?
2. Why is Ms. Hussey so upset about the Robie House? How do the kids show their feelings about it to the outside world? Will the comparison between the arts work? Do you think they are similar or not? Why? Can a group of children make a difference about important things in their world? What makes you think so or not?
3. Explain what Tommy finds at the Robie House. Do you think he should keep it or not? Why? As a reader, how do you know when something small like this might become important to the story? Can you always tell the difference between a red herring and a real clue?
4. How does the fish Tommy found represent everything he's ever wanted? Tommy questions whether the Robie House is more important than his own family's needs. Which one do you think is most important? Why? Tommy ends up lying to his friends over his find. Is he justified or not? What is the effect of this decision?
5. Discuss the reasons why Petra, Tommy, and Calder are having a difficult time with each other. Who do you feel most compassion for? Why? Do you think it is more difficult to get along within a group of three than when the group has an even number of members? How does their friendship change over the course of the novel?
6. What is the history of the Robie House? Do you think it is important to save it? Are there historical buildings in your neighborhood or town that you think should be saved? Why? Do you know (or can you find out) the history of your home?
7. What connections do the kids make between Frank Lloyd Wright (and the Robie House) and *The Invisible Man*, Fibonacci numbers, and the movie *The Rear Window*? Can you make any connections between your life and these topics? Are kids more attuned to connections than adults, or not? What makes you think so?
8. Calder uses pentaminoes to help him think about things, to turn ideas over in his mind. Petra uses her notebook and words. What does Tommy use? What do you use? How would you feel if, like Petra, you lost some important pieces of your work (art, a design, a story)?
9. Explain, in your own words, what the Fibonacci sequence of numbers does. Where is this often found in nature? At the end of the book, where do they find the Fibonacci sequence? Do you think Wright did this intentionally or not? Do you think it added to the pleasing quality of his designs?

10. Ms. Hussey and Mrs. Sharpe play important roles in helping the kids unravel the mystery. Create a list of facts or ideas that the two women aid the kids in learning. Who do you think is more important? Why? Do you think kids in Ms. Hussey's classroom learn more than kids in traditional classrooms, or not? Explain your answer.

11. What risks do the kids take to save the Robie House? Do you think they made wise or foolish decisions? What was the result of their discovery? How was Tommy rewarded for doing the "Wright" thing? In the end, was their risk worth the reward or not? If someone had gotten seriously injured by the culprits (or the process) would they still have been justified? Why or why not?

12. Review the Wright Sandwich Code and the hidden codes inside Brett Helquist's illustrations. What do these elements add to the book? Can you develop a code with your own closest friends? How would you use it?